



The 2013 Annual Report

of the City of Columbus – Human Rights Commission



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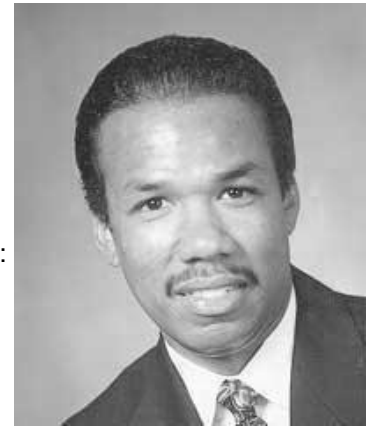
Executive Summary

Chairperson's Report

The Commission continues to work with an ever-evolving and ever-changing world of human rights and diversity. True to its mission, the Commission works:

"To lead Columbus in building and maintaining an inclusive community by:

- Enforcing the Human Rights Ordinance
- Educating the public
- Challenging attitudes and systems that create barriers to equality and
- Empower community members to advance this mission.



This is a hefty mission and a challenging one! Just enforcement alone is a challenge considering the ever-changing legal landscape, but the Commission also takes on the role of attempting to effect attitudinal change within the community. Both are necessary in order to create a truly Welcoming Community. The role of effecting that change comes in the form of many different parts that the Commission staff and Commissioners play in the community. The staff has in 2013 served in a number of board capacities in order to provide insight into the connection between various community projects and initiatives and the diverse communities that exist in Columbus. Director Smith continued in her last year a member of the Heritage Fund Board and as the chair of the Outreach Committee.

During 2013, the Commission continued to try and balance enforcement of the ordinance with trying to change the attitudes. The Commission wrapped up its initiative "Adventures in DiverCity" where community members participated in a program to introduce them to the diversity that exists in the community in which they live! An outgrowth of the program was a community diversity calendar that opened the eyes of many community members who had new awareness of Columbus' depth and breadth of diverse communities which reside here. 2013 saw a record number of attendees of its Annual Dinner meeting which provided the Commission's largest venue in which to educate the public but empower community members to advance its mission. Will Miller who introduced the concept of Welcoming Community took the community to the place where it all began. In addition, the community was able to recognize Owen Hungerford for his foundational work decades ago which helped create the Commission and which serves as a reminder that the work still exists. The dinner served a testament to the support of human rights a core value in Columbus. The Commission weathered staffing and personnel changes in 2013 which impacted the office as with any gaps in staffing, but as it always has, the Commission will regroup for 2014 reinvigorate and continue on with its mission and its goals.

-Gilbert A. Palmer



Mission

To lead Columbus in building and maintaining an inclusive community by:

- Enforcing the Human Rights Ordinance
- Educating the public
- Challenging attitudes and systems that create barriers to equality
- Empowering community members to advance this mission

Ordinance

“It is the public policy of the City to provide all persons an equal opportunity for and in education, employment, public accommodations and acquisition through purchase or rental of real property including but not limited to housing. Equal educational and employment opportunities and equal access to and use of public accommodations and equal opportunities for acquisition of real property and access to credit as defined in Indiana Code, 24-4.5-1-301, are declared to be civil rights.

The practice of denying those civil rights to a person by reason of race, religion, color, sex, pregnancy, disability, national origin or ancestry of such individual is contrary to the principals of equal opportunity stated in this chapter and shall be considered discriminatory practices.

The promotion of equal opportunity without regard to race, religion, color, sex, pregnancy, disability, national origin or ancestry through enforcement, public education and other reasonable methods is the purpose of this chapter. It is also its purpose to protect employers, labor organizations, employment agencies, property owners, real estate brokers, lending institutions and insurance companies from unfounded charges of discrimination through the professional investigation and resolution of complaints.



This chapter shall be construed broadly to effectuate its purpose.” – Columbus Human Rights Commission Ordinance 9.24.020

Rules and Regulations

Through its Rules and Regulations Sections II, III & IV, the Human Rights Commission prohibits discrimination on the basis of:

- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity

In the areas of employment, housing, education, public accommodation or credit. Age, Sexual Orientation and/or Gender Identity complaints are processed through the Commission's Voluntary Mediation Program. (See section II (W) under the Commission's Rules and Regulations.)

Human Rights Commissioners



The Commission is comprised of Columbus citizens appointed by City Council and sworn into office by Mayor Columbus. The Human Rights Commissioners are volunteers whose skills and knowledge encompass business management, government, law, education, entrepreneurship, engineering, law, clergy, and religion. The Commission has been able to effectively carry out its work because of the caliber of talent of the Commissioners. In 2013, City Council appointed three new commissioners, Annette Barnes, Richard Gold and Kelly Benjamin. All of whom bring a wide array of backgrounds that help meet the ordinance's selection criteria of selecting community members who represent the diversity of the community. More importantly, they represent talents which serve the community and commission well – from law to community activism, business and the faith community. Ian Kohen, Commission Vice-Chair was reappointed to the Commission.



New Commissioner Training

Director Smith conducted a “New Commissioner Training” for newly appointed Commissioners Barnes, Gold and Benjamin. The intent of the training was to orient the new commissioners to human rights law and their role as commissioners.

IUPUC Diversity Circles:

Annette Barnes represented the Commission by participating in the six-week Diversity Circles sponsored by IUPUC. The circles bring together diverse participants to discuss issues of diversity to create and promote understanding between diverse community members

Local Anti-Discrimination Enforcement

Multi-Faceted Approach:

In 2013, the Commission saw continued to see case filings in a number of areas. The commission also continued to use mediation and technical assistance as enhancements resolve issues of alleged discrimination in addition to investigation. The Commission takes pride in helping community members resolve issues when filing a complaint is not applicable or the community member chooses not to do so. This local service is valuable layer to resolving issues of alleged discrimination that does not happen on state and federal level.

Requests for Assistance:

In 2013, the Commission again logged nearly 150 calls/walk-ins requests for assistance. 27 of those calls are people looking for assistance outside of the Commission’s legal jurisdiction. As to those areas related to alleged discrimination issues, the top request for assistance was in the area of employment (30%) with housing following next (22%); National origin (21%) was the top basis while race (15%) was the next basis on which the public was requesting assistance. CHRC assistance resulted in 20 cases were officially filed.

As to specific outcomes of the requests for assistance, the Commission provided successful technical assistance on a disability issue regarding a deaf couple in a public accommodation case resulting in actual damages of \$5000. The Commission, one through interagency coordination provided mediation in three cases resulting in \$2000 in damages for the Complainants. The Commission continues to emphasize equitable remedies to discrimination, including training, reinstatement as a tenant or employee when appropriate, education, and restructured business processes in order to prevent future discrimination.



LGBT Discrimination Coverage added to Commission's Rules and Regulations

As a continuation of its local enforcement of the rights of members of the Columbus community, in 2013 the Commission added LGBT language to its Rules and Regulations as a result of HUD changing its regulations to include language to address LGBT discrimination issues. The addition of this language ensured that the City of Columbus would continue to receive federal dollars because of these protections. Most federal grants that flow locally require that there is local anti-discrimination laws. Taken a step further, federal HUD funds received by the City of Columbus now require that there is protections against LGBT populations in housing. For Columbus, the leap was not a challenging one as LGBT coverage was already in its rules & regulations. For specificity, the Commission included specific language for housing discrimination on the basis of one's sexual orientation, bi-sexual, transsexual status. The HUD funds received contingent upon this were used for the demolition of the old REMC building. This is an example of how Columbus has built the foundation that helps the City achieve its economic goals.

YEAR IN REVIEW

ADA Transition Plan Recommendations

As reported in the 2012 report, The Human Rights Department offered to assist the City in the update of the City's Transition Plan in 2013. The final assessment made by Deputy Director Frances Jordan was submitted to the Human Resources office along with recommendations to solve issues found in the assessment.

Councils

Mayor's Advisory Council on Disability and Accessibility

In 2012, the Commission assisted in the research and then development of bylaws and resolution of the Mayor's Advisory Council on Disability and Accessibility. In addition, the Commission staff conducted the application process with approval of the Mayor. After the Mayor's selection of candidates, MACDA had its first meeting November 2012. In an advisory capacity, the Council which was developed at the behest of the Mayor, the Human Rights Commission served as the convener of this group. The group which meets bi-monthly set about determining its committee structure and its goals and objectives for each during 2013. By July 2013, the group developed and approved its focus through the creation of four committees. Although advisory only, the group sought to carry out MACDA's mission through four committees:

Community Awareness – Chaired by Robin Winters

The goal of this committee is to identify and prioritize methods for educating our local community on every day practices that create barriers and to provide simple solutions to remove such barriers

- Corporate/Business Awareness – Grace Kestler



- Sidewalk Accessibility – Bill Pumphrey
- Integrated Community Social Events – Deborah Seeley
- Each of the Committees was
- Commission staff members provided Chairperson Shane Burton with input into the committee structure.

The Community Awareness Committee worked with Chief Maddix in incorporating disability awareness into their annual training. The trainings were slated to begin January for four consecutive sessions. The Commission and MACDA appreciate the tremendous support from the police department in order to continue to expand community knowledge and awareness about the issues facing people with disabilities. The Community Awareness Committee also is working on rollout of Disability Awareness Month.

Welcoming Community Stakeholders Council

Born out of the Mayor's Strategic Plan Committee, of which CHRC Director Lorraine Smith was a member appointed by Mayor Brown, Tracy Souza and Director of the Commission Lorraine Smith created a framework for a Welcoming Community Stakeholders Council in the latter half of 2012. Building on the work of Heritage Fund's Welcoming Community studies and its spin off organizations, the Mayor appointed a Welcoming Community Stakeholder Commission to ensure the sustainability of this community value and strategic priority. The Welcoming Community Stakeholders Council will meet at least twice a year and review progress against the welcoming community metrics. The WCSC will listen to the public and attempt to identify gaps and barriers in reaching our community vision and propose initiatives to close those gaps. The Council meets twice a year and held its first meeting on April 8 2013 and is scheduled to reconvene in 2014. Aimed at bringing together diverse populations such as the LGBT, African American, Latino, disability populations, the Council included representatives from Pride Alliance, MACDA, NAACP, CAMEO, SuCasa. The group began development of a scorecard in which the group would evaluate the Community's progress on welcoming community in areas such as reduction of discrimination, educational programming, general diversity programming and community leadership. In 2013, the Welcoming Community Stakeholders held its first quarterly meeting on April 8, 2013.

Grants

Welcoming Community II Grant:

Threads of our Diversity Threads-CHRC Oral History Project II

The Commission partnered with IUPUC, Pride Alliance and Inclusive Community of Columbus and received one of 13 Welcoming Community grants funded by Heritage Fund. As Pride Alliance and ICC will document stories of the LGBT experience in Columbus, the Commission's project will continue documenting the stories of African Americans in Columbus as a continuation of the first project from



2000. The grant allowed the three organizations to purchase and share video equipment to record their oral histories. The Director interviewed a variety of African Americans who shared their experiences in Columbus through lenses such as family, business, entrepreneurship, educational, the ability to overcome racial barriers and other perspectives. The teams underwent an intensive training required by IUPUC's Institutional Review Board to ensure that interviewers were taking appropriate care in the interview process. Commissioners who have received the training will serve as interviewees for the continuing project. 15 hours of raw footage have been compiled so far.



Adventures in DiverCity

In 2013, the Commission wrapped up its Welcoming Community II project. The Commission partnered with Mill Race Center and received one of 13 Welcoming Community grants funded by Heritage Fund. Adventures in Diversity is an organized and hopefully fun way to involve Bartholomew County residents in events, programs and activities that focus on diversity in and around Bartholomew County - the goal to increase cross cultural learning and awareness and thereby create a more inclusive community.

The program acquired 70+ participants who signed up to be a part of the Adventures in Diversity. We have about 25 different people actively participating in the "Adventure."

Katelyn Diehl was the grand prize winner of the program who won an I-Pad! Ms. Diehl attended all of the required diversity programming in order to take home the I-Pad grand prize. Others received smaller prizes for attending the requisite events and programs. A successful outgrowth of the initiative was the Commission's creation of a Diversity calendar. The Commission received very positive feedback about the calendar. Many community members commented that they didn't realize that the Columbus had so much diversity activity and programming. Chief Maddix was a mid-way participant winner by attending the mid-way requisite programs.



Community Education and Awareness

2013 Human Rights Commission

Annual Dinner

The Commission broke its attendance record in 2013! With Close to 400 guests. The Commission's guest speaker received outstanding marks for his keynote remarks.

The Commission invited Mr. Miller to be the keynote speaker.

As it was his Welcoming Community model that led the way for this community to create various Welcoming Community initiatives such as the CYP, CAMEO and downtown

initiatives. Will Miller traced this community's Welcoming Community journey while placing into perspective its impact upon Columbus' economic vitality.





Student Essay/Poster Art Contest

The Essay and Art Contest, which is traditionally, part of the Commission's Annual Dinner framework, received continues to receive active participation from local elementary, middle and High School Students.

The Commission deems the contest as a means to educate and engage students on issues of diversity and human rights.

William R. Laws Human Rights Award

The 2013 William R. Laws Human Rights Award was presented to Owen Hungerford at its Annual Dinner Meeting on April , 2013. Before a capacity-filled crowd, Mr. Hungerford accepted the award. Mr. Hungerford is one of the early leaders in the community who brought to the fore the discrimination issues facing community members. Through his collaboration and activism with other concerned leaders, the Commission was created.



Board governance Train-the-Trainer

Director Lorraine Smith and Chairperson Gil Palmer participated in a training provided by Heritage Fund to become part of a corps of trainers for Not-for-Profits on "Board Governance".

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Director Smith provided keynote remarks for the Dr. Martin Luther King Day at East High School cafeteria filled to capacity. For the event, the Commission developed a Civil Rights Timeline for distribution to the MLK Breakfast attendees. Deputy Director Frances Jordan participated in a panel discussion at IUPUC. Commission staff, Director Lorraine Smith and Deputy Director Frances Jordan represented the Commission at the evening panel discussion held at Second Baptist Church.



Civil Rights/Sensitivity Training – Love Chapel

Deputy Director Frances Jordan provided Civil Rights/Sensitivity Training for Love Chapel. Evaluations completed by the attendees were no less than a '4' rating (5 being the highest).

Landlord Association Meeting

Director Smith attended the landlord Association meeting with other department heads. Director Smith answered a number of questions regarding Fair Housing Law and requirements. Questions ranged from 55 and older housing requirements and sleeping rooms.

Little People of America Regional Conference:

At the request of local community member Ethan Crough and Little People of America national officer, Mayor Brown and Director Smith provided remarks at the Little People of America Regional Conference held in Columbus on October 9.. The conference is the first held in Columbus.

Kiwanis Meeting Presentation:

Director Smith provided a presentation to Kiwanis and answered questions regarding the Commission and

Black History Month Presentation:

Director Smith provided a Black History Month presentation for attendees at CAMEO's February Meeting.

CAMEO Retreat

Director Smith assisted in facilitating CAMEO's Strategic Planning Retreat. While Chair, Heritage Fund's Outreach Committee developed and created the group in 2011. The group continues to be one of the pertinent welcoming community organizations.

Networking with the Community

Staff and/or Commissioners continued to serve as a resource/liaison to the commission in a number of roles including organizations such as:

- Pride Alliance
- Inclusive Community Coalition
- CAMEO
- BCSC Anti-bullying Task Force
- Teen Pregnancy Council
- CYP
- BCSC Diversity Cabinet



- IUPUC Diversity Cabinet
- IUPUC Department of Education Advisory Board
- Columbus Safe Community Six Sigma Project
- Bartholomew Consolidated School Foundation meetings
- CYP Strategic Planning Meetings
- SuCasa Board of Director's Meetings
- Heritage Fund Scholarship Committee Meetings

NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet

The Commission was represented by Director Lorraine Smith, Chairperson Gil Palmer, Vice-Chair Ian Kohen and Commissioner Rhea Ipek-Baker at the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet held by the local chapter of the NAACP.

Artwork Donated by Cummins to the Commission Office

As a tribute to the work that the Commission does, Cummins donated a picture depicting Civil Rights work, was presented by Cummins Vice-President of Corporate Responsibility to Director Smith at the April 16th Board of Works Meeting.



Heritage Fund Outreach Committee

Director Lorraine Smith continued her role on Heritage Fund Board and as Chair of the Outreach Committee through December 2013. Director Smith served as the Outreach Co-Chair, then as Chair for 8 years. The Outreach Committee developed the Welcoming Community II Follow Survey and subsequently the Welcoming Community II Grants program, which awarded 13 grants to community organizations. These grants enabled these organizations to develop programs and activities which will educate and raise awareness on welcoming community issues. Under the Director Smith's Chair position, the group began work on the Six Sigma project on the Multicultural Center, the Community Portal and the continuation of the Welcoming Community II Grants Program. An additional focus area was added, "Tom Harmon, co-chaired the committee for part of 2013, in line to succeed Director Smith at the end of her term. I will remain as a community advisor on the committee.

Threads of Our Diversity Preview:

The commissioners hosted a preview of the collaborative project, "Threads of our Diversity" which chronicled the LGBT movement in Columbus.



Police Recruiting Technical Assistance:

Director Smith provided assistance and feedback to the Police Department in regard to minority recruitment efforts and ideas.

Human Rights & Civil Liberties Student Projects – New Tech High School

Director Smith served as a Community Evaluator for the Human Rights-Civil Rights Projects at New Tech High School. Some of the projects included civil rights, suffrage movement and.

Heritage Fund Board:

2013 also marked the end of Director Smith's role as a member of Heritage Fund Board. As a board member, Director Smith served for eight years, serving on the Outreach Committees and on the Grants Committee.

Staff Development

- Deputy Director Jordan attended a comprehensive ABA Civil Rights Law Training in Georgia.
- Deputy Director Ramirez attended trainings in Employment Law
- Secretary and office assistant Betsy Schuette attended a training the Womens Conference and trainings on the creation of accessible PDF documents and on Excel.

Commission Office Transitions:

The Commission went through significant transitions during 2013. For several months, the Commission was short-staffed, first due to FMLA leave of Director Smith and at mid-year the resignation of Deputy Director Frances Jordan.

In July 2013, Deputy Director Frances Jordan announced her resignation from the Commission to relocate to Austin, Tex. Frances accepted a position with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission's Civil Rights office (CRO) as a Civil Rights Specialist. The Commission thanks Frances for her tremendous contributions to the Commission and the Columbus community!

With the loss of Deputy Director Jordan, the Commission had to refocus on bringing its staffing back up to an effective level. The office needed to realign its priority during these gaps and reset. After a thorough job search, the position of Deputy Director was filled with Aida Ramirez. The office is grateful to have someone with her skills and knowledge.



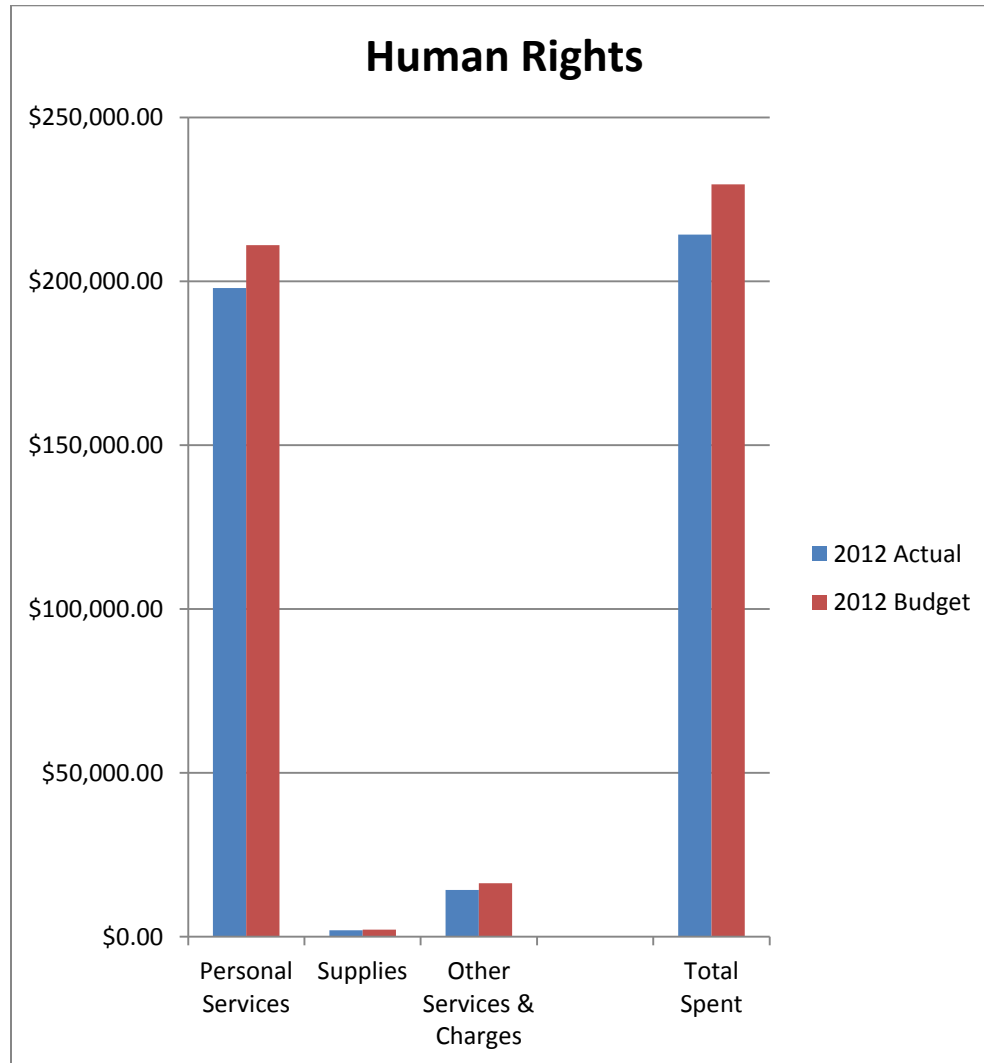
2013 Goals and Objectives

- Goal I – Enforcing the Ordinance – Effective case processing as a key staff priority
- Goal II – Educating the Public – Implementation of current strategies and implementation of creative and innovative strategies that promote a Welcoming Community, education on anti-discrimination law, education on the work of the Commission and human rights history and diversity
- Goal III – Networking with the Community – Maintain key stakeholder relationships with various welcoming community and diversity-related groups by becoming an organization knowledgeable on potential discrimination issues in the community
- Goal IV – Challenging attitudes and systems that create barriers to equality – Become a leader and or partner in the development of innovative strategies and initiatives that break down systemic discrimination by providing solutions on discrimination issues proactively through the development of community networks; by creating awareness on Welcoming Community issues and by assisting Welcoming Community and diversity-oriented groups in their work including:
 - Convening and facilitating Mayor's Council on Disability and Accessibility
 - As applicable, serve as co-convener of proposed Welcoming Community Stakeholder Council
 - Increasing Community Disability Issues Awareness
 - Providing assistance on the City of Columbus ADA Transition Plan as requested and appropriate
 - Support Heritage Fund Welcoming Community Catalyst Work
 - Support Mayor's City-wide strategic plan regarding Welcoming Community



Financials

Human Rights	2012 Actual	2012 Budget	%
Personal Services	\$197,967.80	\$211,020.11	94%
Supplies	\$1,976.81	\$2,200.00	90%
Other Services & Charges	\$14,305.78	\$16,308.00	88%
Total Spent	\$214,250.39	\$229,528.11	93%





Human Rights	2013 Actual	2013 Budget	%
Personal Services	\$198,579.64	\$213,324.00	93%
Supplies	\$1,901.17	\$2,000.00	95%
Other Services & Charges	\$14,845.52	\$14,950.00	99%
Total Spent	\$215,326.33	\$230,274.00	94%
Year Over Year- 2012/2013	\$1,075.94	\$745.89	
Year Over Year- 2012/2013	0.50%	0.32%	

